

Released Time Lesson - Jesus Calms the Storm

Lesson Introduction

Begin today's lesson by asking the class if anyone can explain what a miracle is? Allow a few students to share their thoughts.

People tend to use the word 'miracle' in many different ways....

- When someone leaves the house 10 minutes late to get to work, but they still manage to make it to work on time because traffic is unusually light and they don't catch any red lights - - they say, "It's a miracle I made it to work on time!"
- When a teenager who stays up late and sleeps in until noon during summer break actually wakes up early for the first day of school without using an alarm - - their parents say, "It's a miracle he woke up before noon!"
- When a last place football team scores a winning touchdown in the last few seconds of a game to claim victory over the first place team - - fans say, "It's a miracle they won that game!"
- When you waited until the last minute to bake a cake for your loved one's birthday party and now realize you are missing vanilla extract you head to the grocery store and buy the very last bottle the store has in stock - - you say, "It's a miracle I got the very last bottle!"

None of these situations are actually miracles, though. A miracle is an amazing thing that happens that can not be explained by the laws of nature and that only God can do.

Ask: Does anyone remember an example of a miracle that God performed in the Old Testament? (Allow students to share examples, ensuring the examples they share are valid.)

Ask: True or False? God performs miracles in the New Testament, too.

Answer: True! Last week we learned about how Jesus performed miracles when He healed people.

Jesus had a reason for performing miracles and it was not simply to entertain people or to impress large crowds like some sort of magician. Jesus really wanted people to see that He is not an ordinary man; He is God.

Jesus had a purpose for every miracle He performed. Today we are going to read about a miracle whose purpose was to show us that we don't need to be anxious or afraid.

Lesson - What does the Bible say?

During Jesus's 3 year ministry, many of His days were spent going from town to town teaching people, healing people, serving people, and training His disciples how to do it all. The days were long and tiring. Today's reading picks up at the end of one of those long days of ministry for Jesus and His disciples.

[Read Mark 4:35](#)

After a long day of ministry, Jesus and His disciples are tired. Jesus wants to pull away from the crowd to get some rest. Large crowds of people tended to follow Jesus around when He traveled because of all the great works He would do, and so Jesus realized that the best way to pull away from the crowd for some rest was to hop on a boat and sail across the water.

A lot of Jesus's ministry was done close to a lake called the Sea of Galilee. This is the lake Jesus is talking about in this verse.

[Read Mark 4:36](#)

Some of the crowd even followed them across the lake!

[Read Mark 4:37](#)

The Sea of Galilee was situated in a valley and it was surrounded by hills. Because of how it was situated, it was very common for sudden storms to form over the lake.

Ask: How is the storm described in this verse?

Answer: It is a *fierce* storm and it's causing high waves.

Ask the class whether any students have been on a cruise. If so, ask them whether they experienced big waves while on the ship. Explain that on cruise ships and other boats that people take to go whale watching or sailing there are safety protocols in place to equip boaters to survive if an emergency (like a fierce storm) comes up while they are out on the water. People on the boat wear life jackets, boats are stocked with flotation devices, and large cruise ships even have extra boats attached to them to be used in case of an emergency.

Play video of modern ships caught in huge waves. Have students share how they would be feeling if they were on the boats from the video.

Jesus and the disciples were not in a large cruise ship like the ones we see in modern times. They were in an ancient fishing boat. We have a good idea of what the fishing boat of Jesus's time probably looked like. Show students image of an ancient fishing boat.

Allow a few students to share how they think they would be feeling if they were in one of these ancient fishing boats and a fierce storm arose.

[Read Mark 4:38](#)

Ask: So there is a fierce storm raging, huge waves crashing, wind roaring, water filling the ancient fishing boat...and what is Jesus doing?

Answer: He's *sleeping*?!?!?!?

How can Jesus sleep at a time like this??? Well, that's what the disciples would like to know.

Explain that while some of Jesus's disciples were not experienced at boating, some of them were very experienced fishermen from the Sea of Galilee. They were familiar with boating and with the geography and behavior of the lake. They had likely lived through many storms on the Sea of Galilee.

Regardless of their experience with boating, the disciples were all terrified during this storm. They are convinced they are going to drown. They see Jesus sleeping peacefully at the back of the boat so they wake Him up and ask Him, "Don't you care that we're going to drown?"

[Read Mark 4:39](#)

With just a few spoken words from Jesus, the storm was over. What was once loud and tumultuous and scary was suddenly calm. Jesus simply said, "Silence! Be still!" and everything changed.

[Read Mark 4:40](#)

These disciples have been doing ministry with Jesus for a while now and have witnessed Him perform miracles. Jesus is pointing out to them that they should have had the faith to know that with Him in the boat they were not going to drown. He wants them to realize that they don't have to be afraid when He is with them. He is God and He has absolute authority and control over nature. If God created the earth and

everything in it, certainly He can also control nature and the weather He Himself created. Jesus wants the disciples to make that connection. He wants them to understand His authority and His power so that they can be comforted by it and tell others about it.

[Read Mark 4:41](#)

We can see here that the disciples are still piecing together the puzzle of who Jesus really is. They might not have it all figured out yet, but one thing is certainly clear - - even the wind and the waves obey Him!

Further Discussion

1) The storm on the Sea of Galilee reminds us of storms we experience in our lives - - Jesus's power isn't limited to the weather; He can calm the storms that hit our lives, too!

The scene we just read about sounds very chaotic. The wind was howling, the rain was pouring down, the waves were crashing, and the boat was rocking, swaying and being tossed around as it filled with water. The disciples were downright terrified.

We might never be in a storm at sea, but we've all been in situations where we've felt afraid, nervous, or anxious like the disciples were feeling on that boat.

Facilitate a discussion with the students to come up with a list of situations that bring about fear, nerves, anxiety, or a lack of feeling in control.

Some ideas:

- Parents constantly fighting at home
- Family pet dies
- You get injured and need to have surgery
- Parents go through a divorce and your family is broken up
- Fighting and distance with extended family members
- You have constant disagreements with parents or siblings
- Someone you love is sick and in the hospital
- A close family member dies
- Loved ones move far away
- You move far away
- You are the new kid at school
- Your friends get mad about something and stop talking to you
- Some students at school are mean and make fun of you
- You often feel lonely
- You study hard but your grades are not that great
- You have a big performance coming up where you have to speak in front of a large crowd
- You often feel nervous about things that come up throughout your day
- You spend a lot of time trying to make other people like you and you're not sure that they do
- You often worry that you're not pretty enough, smart enough, popular enough, funny enough for people to like you

When we go through these types of situations, it can feel like there is a storm raging inside of us. It can feel like the chaos from the outside has made its way inside of us. Our mind starts to dwell on negative and scary thoughts. Our stomach starts to hurt. Our palms get sweaty. It becomes hard for us to focus and we have a hard time falling asleep at night. We feel like everything is out of our control and we don't feel good inside. Some of these stormy situations in our lives don't last very long, but some of these storms in our life might last for quite a while.

These are all difficult storms to face, but Jesus can calm all of these storms we just described just like He calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. This story that we read in the Gospel of Mark was included in the Bible for a reason. God wanted us to see that we should turn to Jesus when fierce storms come up in our lives. God is all powerful and we can manage through life's tough situations much better when we stick with God!

2) The storms of life happen to everyone; even if you follow Jesus and obey His Word.

Ask: If you look back at the first verse we read today, Mark 4:35, who made the suggestion to hop on a boat to cross over to the other side of the lake?

Answer: Jesus did.

Ask: Do you think Jesus knew that they were going to be hit by a fierce storm while they were making their way to the other side of the lake?

Answer: Yes, He must have known - He is God and He is omniscient which means He knows *everything*. The storm did not take Jesus by surprise.

The disciples didn't do anything wrong. They chose to follow Jesus. They stuck close to Him. They obeyed what He told them to do (getting in the boat to cross to the other side of the lake). They were doing everything right and they still encountered a storm. This same thing is true for us and the storms of life that happen in our lives.

Even if you are a Christian and do your very best to love God and obey His Word, you will still encounter stormy situations throughout your life. These stormy situations don't take God by surprise and they don't mean that God has forgotten about you or abandoned you. God did not promise us a life free of storms, but He does promise that He will always be with us through the storms.

God uses storms in our life to make us stronger and more mature. He wants to grow our faith by guiding us through hard times. If we never have to go through a bad time, we don't experience that growth. When hard times happen, even when we don't understand why they're happening, we have to rely on our faith in God and that He had a plan and a purpose for the storm we are going through. He can use hard times to bring about good things in our life.

Following Jesus does not guarantee a life free of storms, but it does mean that we can count on Him to be with us through every storm we encounter.

3) Jesus has the power to calm any storm, but it doesn't mean He will do it in the way we expect.

It seemed like it was very easy for Jesus to calm the storm on the lake. He simply told the wind and the waves to be calm and they did. Doesn't that mean He can quickly and easily calm every storm that comes up in my life?

While it's true that God has the power and authority to do whatever He wants, and it's true that He loves us perfectly, it does not mean that He will always take away the storms we encounter.

God may not keep your parents from divorcing, your pet from dying, bullies from being mean, or your family from moving away. If God does not calm the storm we are facing, we can be tempted to think that it means He has forgotten us. That's simply not true. When God doesn't calm the storm in your life, He can instead calm the storm in **you**. When you cry out to Him to calm the raging storm, He can work in you and calm you down from the inside out. Your circumstances may not be changed, but **you** will be changed. He can help you to feel differently about the situation you are in; He can help you to remain calm; He can help you to figure out a way out; He can help you to find joy in difficult circumstances; He can help you find confidence you might be lacking; He can make you feel comforted; He can fill you with confidence and excitement.

When He does not choose to calm the storm on the outside, it may simply be because He is using it to show you that He can calm the storm in **you** instead.

Object Lesson - Stormy Glitter Bottle



Distribute a Stormy Glitter Bottle to each student. Demonstrate for the class that when the bottle is shaken up, the glitter inside swirls all around and makes for a chaotic (“stormy”) scene. Once you set the bottle down, the glitter will eventually calm and settle to the bottom. Encourage students to take their Stormy Glitter Bottles home and shake them up whenever they are feeling stormy inside. Then they should set the bottle down and as they watch the glitter settle to the bottom and be reminded and encouraged that Jesus can help to calm the storm inside of them. Encourage them to spend the time that it takes the glitter to settle to the bottom to pray to God for help in the storm they are facing.

IMPORTANT: Please warn students not to drink the liquid in these water bottles. Clear liquid glue and glitter have been added to the bottled water making it unsafe to drink.

(For reference - Instructions to make calming glitter bottle: [Fireflies and Mudpies](#))

Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:7 - “Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.”